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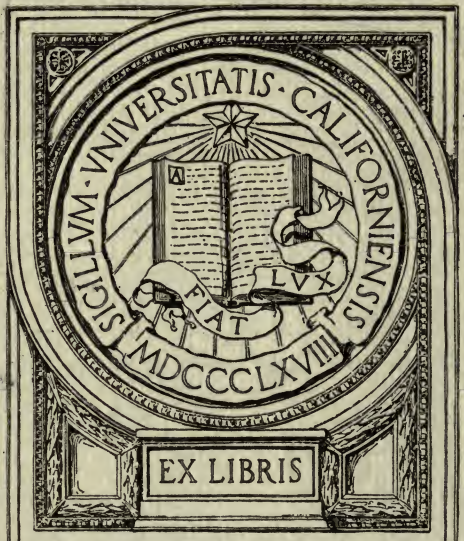
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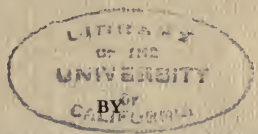
WOMAN AND HER POSSIBILITIES

AN ADDRESS

TO THE WOMEN'S NON-PARTY POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, AND THE LEAGUE OF LIBERAL CHRISTIAN WOMEN, OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



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BY

W. RAMSAY SMITH

M.D., C.M., D.Sc., F.R.S. (Edin.)

Delivered and printed by request.

ADELAIDE
G. HASSELL & SON, 104 CURRIE STREET
1913

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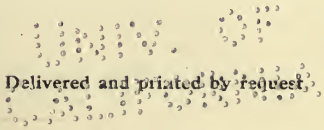

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WOMAN AND HER POSSIBILITIES

"For me, I am the mistress of my fate."

This is no echo of Tennyson's "Man is man and master of his fate," no copy of Henley's "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul." The assertion is put by Shakespeare into the mouth of a noble Roman lady; and it is a claim to deal with herself as she may list, body, mind, and reputation—even with her life, wife though she be. One wonders whether a Roman lady ever felt such a sentiment or formulated it, or whether Shakespeare is projecting backwards, over a period of two thousand years or more, the demand of a woman of his own time, just as he ascribes to Roman days certain heraldic devices and social and military customs that did not come into existence until much later times. In either case, be it the claim of a Roman lady or of an English woman of the sixteenth century, how is it that there appears to us to be a certain incongruity about it, and how did it strike the people of Shakespeare's time? And did the fact that it was a married woman's claim affect in any way its validity or its reasonableness? Why should we feel surprised at such a pronouncement? Why should there be any reason to admire what one would think was an obvious platitude in general morals? Or why should there be a sort of defiant

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apology on a wife's part for doing what she believed to be her duty as a woman? Because then, as now, the sentiment set forth was so opposed to conventional ideas that few people would listen for a moment to the claimant, or, if they did, would allow the claim.

Some people are apathetic on the woman question. They have no feeling that the time is in any way out of joint. If, when they open their eyes for a moment as they turn in their noonday sleep, they should see that things now are different from even our own grandmothers' days, they accept this as evidence of a degeneracy that is deplorable. Other people feel the unsatisfactoriness, the irksomeness, the unfairness of it all, and protest vehemently against conditions that are beginning to be insufferable. But they make no attempt to find what is wrong at the heart of things; much less do they care to set about helping to mend matters. With some people, the dear delight of putting wrong things right is not to be compared with the sweet satisfaction of having them as a perennial subject of complaint, to be used as a safety-valve to let off temper and discontent from any and every cause arising. Other people, again, agitate for reform, which means for them legislative change in some particular, the passing of some parliamentary measure which may occasion more mischief than the condition it is meant to cure. Some, however, are beginning to deal with the whole question radically, by studying human nature, human institutions, systems of legislation, religions, civilizations, and social movements. And the most hopeful feature of the time is that this class of people includes both men and women.

To begin near home, racially, what do we know of the social conditions, intellectual accomplish-

ments, moral sentiments, and general characteristics of the women, say, of Great Britain?

It may appear somewhat remarkable that the best, if not the first complete account of the evolution and characteristics of the English woman should be written by a foreigner. This, however, is of a piece with the fact that for several years the professor of the Japanese language and literature in Tokio University was an Englishman—Professor Basil Chamberlain. But apart from the fact that we never understand ourselves, never study ourselves, never dare to criticize ourselves, until some outsider like Max O'Rell, Mark Twain, or Yoshio Markino looks at us through his spectacles, there is an additional significance in a foreigner writing on English women. I remember many years ago asking a German student of philosophy, who had come to Edinburgh University to study Sanskrit, how they got on with the philosophical writings of their great countryman, Kant. He said that when they failed to make out his meaning in the German original they consulted a French translation; the French, he said, were quick to seize the general meaning of a passage. Now Staars has undoubtedly studied the facts, has seized the meaning of the problems of the women in England, and has accomplished the difficult task of putting them in their proper perspective. He gives as complete an account as one can possibly give of the legal and social position of women in England and of the characteristics that have resulted in consequence of such position. He shows why the nineteenth century was a period of progress and expansion. and what movements characterized it; how a demand for education arose, and how one door after another was open to women in literature, science, and commerce; how expansion cannot be restrained

with impunity; how in science, politics, religion, and economics we find the very same people at the head of all progressive thought; how the women's movement was originated and helped, and public opinion influenced in various ways by Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, Frances Power Cobbe, Mary Somerville, and Florence Nightingale; how the new ideal arose of woman as a spiritual creature, a social being, a citizen, a wife and mother, and what adjustments were necessary in consequence; and how the questions of marriage and motherhood are demanding discussion and solution. Staars does not deal with the relations between lovers, engaged couples, and married people; and he deals only with women of the educated classes. He promises to treat of working class women in another book.

In the meanwhile, however, we possess a great deal of information regarding the working classes generally. Take some examples of what has been done in England and elsewhere. About ten years ago, two American society ladies, Mrs. John van Vorst and Miss Marie van Vorst, published a book giving an account of their experiences during the time that they went and lived the life of working girls in American mills and factories, eating the same sort of food, wearing the same sort of clothes, lodging among the toilers; studying their needs, acquainting themselves with their desires, their hopes, their aspirations, their fears, their temptations; finding what their capacities are as compared with other women's; studying the effects of their surroundings on their character; comparing factory discipline with the discipline of parents; finding out the effects of factory life, the physical conditions of the bodies of the workers, the mental character of the workers, their bodily sensations in the matter of

food; comparing the work done by women and boys, and the relative merits of men and women as bosses; finding what can be done by way of amusing or instructing the workers and giving them real help; and investigating the effects of factory work on family life and motherhood and the little children.

The conditions of child labour in England have been set forth by Mrs. Archibald Mackirdy—Olive Malvery, in her books, "The Soul Market" and "Baby Toilers." Besides giving an account of the actual conditions that exist, she touches here and there on the causes and the remedies, stating what reforms are urgently demanded, and indicating the means of bringing them about. In common with many others, she shows the radical errors connected with the English attitude towards insanitary houses, sweating landlords, mis-spent charity, alien immigration, and irresponsible parents. If you wish to know more about the conditions of the women and child workers in England and about the general poverty that exists, you will find abundance of materials in books like Rowntree's "A Study of Poverty," to say little about the numerous blue books and reports of Royal Commissions. That, however, is but one side of the subject of the condition of England as regards her population and her outlook. If you read carefully and critically books like Whitham's "Heredity and Society" you will see what a damning indictment can be drawn up regarding the apathy of the rulers; the ignorance of those concerned with or responsible for the social conditions; the indifference of the leaders of the people to the plainest facts of heredity, environment, race-culture, and political economy; and the incapacity of the people who are entrusted with the training, education, and destiny of the young.

Recently I have been in England and elsewhere, with my eyes not altogether closed, observing the conditions that vitally concern the human race and the human individual. Kipling expresses my feeling not inaptly:

"I will trek south and make sure
If it's only my fancy or not
That the sunshine of England is pale
And the breezes of England are stale,
And there's something gone small with the lot."

In the books I have mentioned the question of woman's place and work bulks large; in fact, nearly every subject in politics and in sociology is regarded as but one side of the woman question. In some places much interest is displayed in this question. There are societies in existence which spend time and money in producing and circulating literature on the subject of women's rights, or rather of women's wrongs. Such literature is sometimes indifferent; sometimes bad (this is inevitable wherever paid agitators and salaried organizers are employed); sometimes good, even if one-sided. The publications of *The New Age Press* are well worth reading. They are written popularly, sometimes by non-experts, and they generally set forth clearly what the writers' opinions and desiderata are. One, "The Common-Sense of the Woman Question," a series of essays edited by Murby, covers a good deal of the ground of work, social arrangements, wages, legislation, and general eugenics from the women's point of view. Summed up it is, "Our spheres of work are not conflicting—they are complementary. Men have the intellectual fathering—women the physical mothering of the race. The present social fiasco is the result of the neglect of the mother-side of life, and I conceive that in future the work of administrative women will be largely concerned in the provision of those elementary requirements of

a healthy life now so often ignored. Thus will the opportunities of social service be multiplied, and the maternal function find its natural satisfaction in a communal care."

Other publications deal with particular points or special questions, and touch only incidentally on the general question of woman's place, work, and possibilities. Such, for instance, is "The Endowment of Motherhood," by Dr. Eder.

In general literature and in fiction one finds a large number of books dealing with one or more problems of the woman question. For example, Cicely Hamilton, in "Marriage as a Trade," treats of the trade aspect of marriage; i.e., wifehood and motherhood considered as a means of livelihood for women—the business of getting or gaining a partner, and the business of marriage partnership, without reference to the paramount claims of love, or without considering love at all. Strangely enough, Dorothea Gerard had previously written a book, "Holy Matrimony," which sets forth the risks and dangers of such a view of marriage, really a corrective or an antidote to Miss Hamilton's work. Some books, again, deal with the legal anomalies connected with the marriage laws. Some take up one special subject, which looks new and seems opposed to all morality and Christian practice, but which was sanctioned by the churches and was regarded some hundreds of years ago as highly proper. Some take up a particular problem in the psychology or physiology of love; thus Victoria Cross in "Anna Lombard," a book which was praised so highly by Mr. Stead, furnishes a study in the polyandrous possibilities of woman, and Florence Barclay in more than one book deals with the subject of the older wife and the younger husband. Some writers deal

with more general physiological or psychological problems; e.g., "Letters to Myself," by a Woman of Forty, and Karin Michaelis's "The Dangerous Age." Some deal either incidentally or specifically with the primitive or natural instincts of women and the relations of these to married life and social conditions—I may instance "Phrynette Married," by Martha Troly-Curtin, and "The Woman Who Did," by Grant Allen, one of the earliest and best studies. In a vast number of modern books of every description one finds detached references to woman's place, woman's work, woman's power, woman's possibilities, woman's rights, woman's wrongs, woman's desires, woman's demands—to the woman progressive and the woman aggressive, who are not necessarily one.

From these works, the products, so to speak, of pamphleteers and general writers, let us turn now to literature of a different class, to works which endeavour to get right to the heart of things, which

> "Go straight at all the stir and strife,
> That agitate our human life;
> All have it, but not many know it."

First, then, is Olive Schreiner's "Woman and Labour," one of the most comprehensive and best thought-out books on the subject, and, withal, probably the most literary.

The book, as she says, is not a general view of the whole vast body of phenomena connected with woman's position; it is not even a bird's eye view of the whole question of woman's relation to labour. She deals with certain things that she considers of prime importance, viz.: the question of the "parasitism" of women; the non-recognition of, and the inadequate compensation given for, woman's labour; the necessity for an increased sense of sexual and paternal responsibility, and an increased

justice towards women as domestic labourers; the rightfulness of paying a woman the same wages as a man for the same amount and quality of work; the readjusting of woman towards a higher appreciation of the sacredness of all sex relations, and a clearer perception of the sex relation between man and woman as the basis of human society, on whose integrity, beauty, and healthfulness depend the wealth and beauty of human life as a whole; and, above all, from our present point of view, the recognition that sex and the sexual relation between man and woman have distinct aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritual functions and ends, apart entirely from physical reproduction.

The claims of women she sets forth thus: "We do not ask that the wheels of time should reverse themselves, or the stream of life flow backward. We do not ask that our ancient spinning-wheels be again resuscitated and placed in our hands; we do not demand that our old grindstones and hoes be returned to us; or that man should again betake himself entirely to his ancient province of war and the chase, leaving to us all domestic and civil labour. We do not even demand that society shall immediately so reconstruct itself that every woman may be again a child-bearer (deep and overmastering as lies the hunger for motherhood in every virile woman's heart!); neither do we demand that the children whom we bear shall again be put exclusively into our hands to train. This, we know, cannot be. The past material conditions of life have gone for ever; no will of man can recall them; but *this* is our demand: We demand that, in that strange new world that is arising alike upon the man and the woman, where nothing is as it was, and all things are assuming new shapes and relations, that in this new world we also shall have

our share of honoured and socially useful human toil, our full half of the labour of the Children of Woman. We demand nothing more than this, and we will take nothing less. *This is our Woman's Right!*—From the judge's seat to the legislator's chair; from the statesman's closet to the merchant's office; from the chemist's laboratory to the astronomer's tower; there is no post or form of toil for which it is not our intention to attempt to fit ourselves; and there is no closed door we do not intend to force open; and there is no fruit in the garden of knowledge it is not our determination to eat. Acting in us, and through us, Nature we know will mercilessly expose to us our deficiencies in the field of human toil, and reveal to us our powers. *And, for to-day, we take all labour for our province.*"

Olive Schreiner does not conceal the difficulties inseparable from attempts to bring about these reforms. She says: "It is also inevitable that this suffering and conflict must make itself felt in its acutest form in the person of the most advanced individual of our societies. It is the swimmer who first leaps into the frozen stream who is cut sharpest by the ice; those who follow find it broken, and the last find it gone. It is the man or woman who first treads down the path which the bulk of humanity will ultimately follow, who must find themselves at last in solitudes where the silence is deadly. [It is not the treading of the wine-press, but the treading of the wine-press *alone*.] The fact that any course of human action leading to adjustment, leads also to immediate suffering, by dividing the individual from the bulk of his fellows, is no argument against it; that solitude and suffering is the crown of thorns which marks the kingship of earth's Messiahs: it is the mark of the leader." There is an echo here of the warning sounded by

the Prince of Peace: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Again: "If the social movement, through which the most advanced women of our day are attempting to bring themselves into co-ordination with the new conditions of life, removes them immeasurably from certain types of the primitive male; the same movement equally removes the new male from the old female. The sexual tragedy of modern life lies, not in the fact that woman as such is tending to differ fundamentally from man as such; but that, in the unassorted confusion of our modern life, it is continually the modified type of man or woman who is thrown into the closest personal relations with the antiquated type of the opposite sex; that between father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister, husband and wife, may sometimes be found to intervene not merely years, but even centuries of social evolution." Probably the most tragic unions are those between men of the old order and women of the new—and the majority of the new order women are not found among the younger generation.

Mrs. Gilman, in her book "The Man-Made World," takes a somewhat different standpoint and applies herself to a novel task. This she states thus: "Assuming the Gynaecocentric Theory to be the true one—that the female is the race type, and the male, originally but a sex type, reached a later equality with the female, and, in the human race, became her master for a considerable historic period —this book gives a series of studies of the effect upon our human development of this unprecedented dominance of the male, showing it to be by no means an unmixed good. It grants to men, to-day, a high pre-eminence over women in human develop-

ment, but shows this pre-eminence to be a distinction of humanity and not of sex, fully open to women if they use their human powers."

All she says is well worth reading carefully, since the scientific and historical information is given with an unusual degree of carefulness and accuracy. Her statements regarding the degradation of women in various races and at various times are mild compared with, say, the writings of the fathers of the church or the bare records of the proceedings of some church councils.

Among savage peoples and among primitive people subsisting by hunting, the men are the slayers, the women do everything else. In industries men were at first women's comrades, afterwards their competitors. Nowadays, in civilized countries women wish to compete on equal terms with men in everything pertaining to work, wage-earning and social status. What resemblances and differences have to be taken into account when estimating the claims of women to compete with men in these fields?

Men and women both belong to the human species; and both are born of women. Perhaps these are the only respects in which all men and all women resemble each other. Apart from the differences existing in the bodily organs that are specially concerned in the continuation of the race, what other differences are there between men and women? An enumeration of the many and various bodily and mental characters in which differences have been noted and scientifically studied would prove highly interesting and probably extremely instructive, as well as somewhat surprising. But we can only glance at this subject.

Anatomical differences are seen in the general bodily form and proportions, in the head, brain,

spine, pelvis, hair, and tint of skin. Physiological differences are found in touch, sensibility to pain, smell, taste, sight, hearing, muscular strength, quickness of movement, manual dexterity, resistance to disease and death, and in the cyclic life. Psychological differences are seen in rapidity of perception, dreaming and the states allied thereto, the emotions, artistic impulses, and religious feeling.

Speaking generally: Bodily and mentally women are the more stable, are less changeful in structure, present fewer anatomical abnormalities, comprise fewer geniuses and fewer idiots, are more near the typical or race-form. They are really the race-stiffening material; are more fitted for endurance and stability (the home stayers, the permanent centres) as contrasted with men (the roamers about), who are capable of feats of strength, violence, speed, and bursts of energy. Women are more devout than men, more tyrannical, more bigoted and intolerant, more jealous, more deceitful, more cruel.

As to what the position of women has been and is, the injustice of all sorts—legal, social, religious, industrial, individual—from which women have suffered and are suffering, I propose to say little. I have no doubt you are competent to say enough on this subject for yourselves. You will find materials in books like Lecky's "History of European Morals," in Havelock Ellis's writings, as well as in books of anthropology, to give you a fairly accurate idea of woman's position under man-made customs, man-made superstitions, man-made laws, man-made history, man-made holy scripture, and man-made exegetics thereof. Nor do I mean to say much on what has been done by way of removing legal disabilities, granting equal privileges in education and in industrial occupations and such like.

Much study has been devoted to men and women as human beings, and to the place they occupy, or are fitted to occupy, in the continuation and advancement of the race. Now the perpetuation of the human species is one thing, the advancement of the human race is quite another. I am not speaking of "eugenics"—the wise-breeding, and the means of accomplishing it. I am thinking of the possibilities of men and women as individuals, and of the forces that will make each the best possible. I ask whether a great deal of what is regarded as of primary importance in the reform movement is not really secondary; whether we are not looking too much at moonbeams and the scintillations of stars, and neglecting the sun's light and heat; whether, in many instances, we are not fixing our attention too much on the claims of many and diverse minorities and exceptions, and overlooking the great mass of humanity; whether, in much of what we call recent advance and present requirements, we are not working at the circumference and letting the centre hang untrue; whether we are not trying to deal with the individual sparks and neglecting the fire. Is it possible that women and their sympathizers may be pointing at stones and asking for them, thinking they are loaves of bread—the bread of life itself? If women got an eight-hours' household day; if they had every field of industrial and professional work open to them, with wages boards and all that these imply, competing with men in a free field and with no favour, and receiving equal wages for equal work; if, when married, they received a fixed share of the husbands' incomes, paid directly to them for domestic purposes; if there were universal suffrage for them as for men; if they were eligible for seats in parliament and on all public boards in which women and children have a

practical interest—and these demands seem only fair for women to whom the conditions apply; if women were given, or if they took, all these things and all similar "rights" that they are demanding, is it possible they might be gaining the whole world and losing themselves? What would they be taking in exchange for their lives?

"Once upon a time," as they say in fairy tales, or "one day," as they say in fables, the womenkind of the world sent a deputation of women to Father Jove, the Great Protector of the Earth and the Ruler of all Mankind, in order to set forth to him the unhappy condition of mortals and the great harm that resulted to the human race in consequence of the evils that then existed. Many remèdies they said had been tried by men, but none of them had succeeded in making men and women companions and helpers. Competition was keen, misunderstanding was universal, strife was rampant, antagonism was rife. To put an end to all these evils, the women desired only one boon, a great one no doubt, but one that would end all strife, save the race, and usher in a new Golden Age. They asked that from that time forward all boys and girls, the future men and women, should be conceived by women, nourished by their mothers' lifeblood until the time of birth, and then protected, guided, educated and guarded by them until they were able to look after themselves. Father Jove considered the matter, and without calling for a report, granted their wish; and ever after, the world went—How?

What is the clamant necessity here and now? It is the proper adjustment of the relations of men and women in social and in family life, in respect to love and labour. And why? Because it is through these relations that men are made perfect, and that women have the means of making them so.

How many people have pondered on the significance of the obvious fact that man is born of a woman? To a man, his share in the act of begetting is a passing momentary incident; at most he merely hands on to the progeny what he inherited, but was powerless to modify. I leave to you women the task of working out the woman's share in the fashioning of the latest begotten of the ages; in providing them with their bodily subsistence, their mental pabulum, their moral guidance; in having the first and largest opportunities of forming their habits and their characters. Woman's influence on the future men and women is paramount as well as primary. What do women require in order to use this influence for the best ends? Firstly, knowledge; secondly, opportunity. How far are we giving them either the knowledge or the opportunity?

A knowledge of our present day circumstances, of our social environment and its history is necessary if we are to understand the place and relations of men and women. Our age is unique; it is the age of commercialism. This commercialism is a recent development; and we must try to understand its power and the effect it has on the people of a country. We must try to realize what effect the extension of women's rights will have in the presence of such an apparently overmastering force —which at bottom appeals to the most egoistical or selfish part of man's nature.

One who studied very carefully the problems of life and morals and the race generally, says: "I have English business friends: men who control vast movements of money. They do not hesitate to speak frankly about the cruelties and bitterness of commercial competition. Our whole civilization is based upon immorality—if we are to accept either the Buddhist or the Christian system of ethics.

There is a comparative morality, of course; but he who follows the old code must fail. What you and I love—what we admire—what we aspire after—does not belong to industrialism; yet only in industrialism can any of us—even a Spencer, or Huxley, or Tennyson—exist. We can do what is beautiful or right only by the aid of industrialism, unless, like Thoreau, we prefer to live in the woods. A larger morality will come—but only when competition ends."

All that the old religions and philosophies taught about the curse of the love of money tells with a thousandfold force in this present commercial age. Then it was chiefly the injury to a man's self that had to be reckoned with; the evil effect extended only to the hardening of his heart, the eating away of his soul, the injury to his own self. Now it involves the tragedy of a thousand other lives, the loss of all that is true and sacred in the family, and of all that is good and beautiful in the world and in life. How can any of us contrive to live or make a living without feeling the chilling, paralyzing, soul-withering influence of Mammon?

But our day is also the day of philosophical evolution, the day when everything pertaining to man and man's place is liable to be cast into the melting pot in order to show what is dross and what is gold, what is transient and what is abiding, what is accidental and what is "essential." Elsewhere I have spoken at some length on the subject of man from the point of view of evolution, and have tried to give an outline of what should be taught to men and women on the subject. Let me give the evolutional view of women in another student's words: "Let us think of a sweet young pure girl, with the mother-soul in her but half-fledged. . . . . According to evolutional philosophy, what is she?

Not one, but countless myriads of millions of dead in *one life manifestation*—an incomprehensible Multiple, that has apeared but once in the order of the Cosmos, and never can apear again.

"But that is only the barest definition. Why is she beautiful? Because in the struggles of unknown millions of years between the tendency to beauty and the tendency to ugliness, the beautiful triumphed over unspeakable obstacles and won. Why is she good and sweet and lovable? Because by the sacrifices, and the love, and the sense of goodness acquired by countless millions of mothers, —in spite of all conceivable suffering and pain and terror and fear and wickedness,—the sum of all the unthinkable multitude of tendencies in the race to goodness triumphed to appear in her."

"Then there is this other very awful thing. Here is a woman, for example, who is good, sweet, beautiful. Since the being of the world, all life, all humanity, all progress has been working against evil and death in one line. The end of the line only is visible. It is that girl. She represents the supreme effort. But she is a creator. Her place is to continue the infinite work of the dead. He who weds her has an awful responsibility, both to the dead and to the unborn. To the dead, if he should mar their work. To the future, if he plant in that bosom a life incapable of continuing the progress of the past."

When men and women understand themselves, their bodies and their bodily functions, their instincts, their habits, their appetites, their emotions, their wills—what all these are and how they are evolved in the race and in the individual; when they know what they themselves are capable of; what their particular and individual limitations are; what the complete development of "the whole man"

means for them in personal, family, and social life; and what is implied in the word "duty"; then they will utilize every fact within their knowledge in order to help them to live their complete life and to reach their fullest development, to attain their highest ideals, experience the most refined feelings, enjoy the highest emotions, through a knowledge of physiology, psychology, hygiene, history, art, literature, and religion. In the great world of humanity some people at present are like mere animals; some show glimmerings of human emotion, some are capable of intellectual enjoyment, and a few are capable of all-round self-expression.

On the subject we are now considering, mere opinions are worthless. The value of any opinion depends upon the number and trustworthiness of the "facts" on which it is founded; and few people know anything of the facts. I feel that my business here and now is to find out what facts are known, to sift out and set forth the evidence; and to exhibit it in such a way as to make clear its bearing on human nature and the experience of human life—on love, mating, duties, privileges, occupations, possibilities.

What is your place in the world? What is mine? What are your duties, and mine? I should put self first in these questions, for my own duty is my first and chief concern. I shall try to give the facts of individual and social life and leave you to apply them.

Swedenborg, in his Vision of Hell saw everybody completely busy in making everybody else virtuous. Robert Louis Stevenson said that his duty to his neighbour was to make him happy if he might. This is a warning against trying to fit every man to one die or mould. A moralist writes on this subject thus: "The tragedy of life comes in large part from

the persistent attempt to force our own ideas of good fortune down our neighbour's throat. The pathos of life comes in large part from his too amiable compliance, his vain attempt to follow a light which he does not see. If we ourselves have found the light, or believe that we have, let us by all means try to reveal it to our brother." But it is no part of our duty to blind him by our light. We can never really help people by making decisions for them. We can only put all the pros and cons before them and allow them to choose for themselves. Anything else is harmful in the extreme. Trying to make worms stand on their tails may have its points, as a pastime; as an occupation, it has its drawbacks, even to the worms. Our difficulties are further increased by the complexity and artificiality of our circumstances in life. In many things the human species has become very conventional. If we trace the origin and progress of music, painting, poetry, morality, we see ample evidence of the fact. Now and again there comes a revolt against convention. Every great moral teacher and reformer has been a breaker of the formerly accepted laws. So also in other departments, in literature, art, and music. Poetry was thought to be inseparably connected with and dependent upon rhyme and rhythm. Walt Whitman went back to the original and fundamental modes of expression and threw his "stuff" at one anyhow. Millet, the French painter, took artists and the public back to an immediate and direct revelation of nature. Wagner cast forth his melodies and harmonies in such a fashion as to make it difficult if not impossible to say in what key his music was written. Now, amidst all claims, disputes, wranglings, anomalies, injustices, is it possible after a similar fashion to revert to first principles, to return

to nature after the thunder of ages of convention and listen to her still small voice in things pertaining to morals? Morality itself is subjected to rigorous examination, with some striking results by even the strictest moralists.

"The function of morality," says a modern university professor of sociology, "is to regulate the activities of associated life so that all may have what we call fair play." Morality means "live and let live." This reads uncommonly like the Golden Rule. Morality concerns itself with duty, doing things, with actions, with conduct, which is not merely three-fourths, but the whole, of life. And conduct is good or bad, right or wrong, as it helps or hinders the welfare of the individual and the race.

The Christian is

> "Not he that repeateth the name
> But he that doeth the will!"

A writer says, "Jesus placed the entire emphasis upon action—not upon belief, not upon good intention, but upon efficiency." This is what Nietzsche fails to comprehend when he criticizes Christianity and compares his philosophy with what he conceives to be the teaching of Christ. A quarter of a century ago it was my business, and it then promised to be my life's work, to study mental philosophy in all its branches, and all its bearings. Recently I wondered if I still possessed any of the former facility of finding my way in the mazes of philosophies, so I read through Nietzsche's philosophy. I failed to find anything in that much-discussed philosophy that is in any way antagonistic to Christ's teaching. Christ taught self-expression as well as self-repression, self-assertion as well as self-denial, culture as well as restraint. The Christian ideal of man is not a being made up of a bundle of nega-

tions, a person whose virtues consist of merely negative vices.

"It is a curiously inverted view of morals, the view which regards as praiseworthy those narrow, inexperienced, poverty-stricken souls whose slender virtue consists in the evil they have omitted to do. To renounce the world, to renounce life, to renounce the self—this is not the path of the moral life. The timid little souls who live in a corner and keep out of harm's way by keeping out of the way of good, are not moral persons. They are not even harmless, for by their cowardice they inspire others with a similar lack of courage."

"Morality, in the most general sense, represents the code under which activities are best carried on, and is worked out in the school of experience." "At bottom, conscience, instinct, and intuition are but inductions from individual or race experience so swiftly drawn that we do not at first recognize their origin." This means that when we get to the true heart of things, our feelings will tell us instinctively if the act is right or wrong, helpful or harmful, elevating to us and others or a violating our best nature. The tenderest humanity, like the lily, will at times, gradually and unostentatiously, push aside all sorts of palaeo-ethical traditions and neo-ethical conventions, and will put forth its fairest and purest flowers and bring forth its finest fruit, unstained and unashamed.

The utmost efforts of education in after-life may possibly be sufficient or may fail to free us from the trammels which the circumstances of our birth and early training have imposed upon us. On the other hand, some moral cataclysm may overtake us and sweep away our rags of conventionalism as in the scenes of a dissolving view. There are circumstances in which a woman may, with all decency

and propriety, break through a life-long natural timidity or years of case-hardened constraint and unreservedly tell the man of her choice, "I love you with all my heart, better than anything or anyone in the world." In doing so she may transgress the conventions, but she is true to her best nature, and her action is morally right. "Morality," says an earnest thinker on this subject, "is not shown by any unavoidable obedience to codes—indeed, it's often shown in the breaking of them. It is shown best, I think, when men, in defiance of traditions, conventions, and prejudices—without any obligation, and in utter disregard of their own interests—follow the guiding of their own hearts on the path of what they feel to be eternally right and true."

It is just here that we have to face the difficulty inseparable from the process of reform. It is the same difficulty that at present besets the enlightened educationist. Suppose a parent possessing a knowledge of his child's nature and character, and a knowledge also of the methods of rational education, were to endeavour to have that child educated according to the most enlightened and rational methods, what would the result be to parents and child alike? Similarly, what would happen if we ran-a-moke at our present social systems, practices, superstitions, traditions, legislation, and family and social ties? Possible disaster for the reformer, and almost certain ruin for the very people he meant to assist or to emancipate. There is an evident want of conformity between our healthy natural instincts and our social conditions and needs. If we are to succeed in true reform, the reconstruction must be a gradual process: we must build in a brick here and loosen a stone there, gain the confidence of a fellow creature here and forbear to offend one there, introduce necessary changes as occasion

arises, educate individuals and endeavour to form a healthy public opinion as a preliminary to passing parliamentary and other measures. We must endeavour to do the utmost amount of good we can, having regard to present conditions and limitations, and recognizing the frailty of others while we ourselves gather strength.

Just at this point we may pause and take a Pisgah view of the Woman's Land of Promise that has to be conquered. I will describe it in a spiritual woman's words: "Woman will become the custodian of the race, and never more, under any pressure, will be able to give birth to a less than holy child. When this point shall have been reached obstacles will go down as straws before the wind, or before a great fire. Delicate women will work as servants, if need be—or starve—or die. But they will cease from prostitution, legal or illegal, and it will be the beginning of the dawn. And is this dawn not worth suffering for—pleading for—being patient for? Is anything quite so intolerable as a continuation of the present situation?"

"Ancient philosophy," says Dora Melegari, "had a dogmatic way of dividing men into good and bad, sages and fools, strong and weak, pure and impure, atheists and believers; it had too many shades or too few! Would it not be more practical and true henceforth to divide them into two categories, corresponding to the tendency to which the future points: makers of sorrow and makers of joy?"

Right and wrong can no longer be written down as absolute terms, but must be counted purely relative. Right and wrong change their significance, as all words do, with the growing intelligence of the race and with changed circumstances and changing sentiment. Every act must be judged in the light of its moral significance if it has any. Consider

St. Paul's discussion of the question of eating and drinking. "The young man who marries a wife whom he cannot decently support, who brings children into the world whom he cannot decently provide for and equip, is an immoral person. The woman who becomes the partner of such enfeebling poverty must share the blame as well as the suffering." Further, let it be recognized that in civilized and Christianized society, and especially where women are characterized by refinement and culture, there is in the relations of husbands and wives, probably, if not certainly, more real immorality, more disregard of human feelings and well-being and individual self-realization and the rights of others, than there is in any other mutual or social relationship.

Marriage is the result of children; children are not the result of marriage. Marriage instituted itself on account of the children's need of sustenance, protection, and training; but man has used it for his own selfish purposes. The institution exists for the benefit accruing to the race and for the happiness and well-being of the family. If it does otherwise it is immoral. No outside legislation can insist upon or enforce all those highest and most sacred feelings, practices, and observances that sum up conjugal and family life in its most sacred and ideal features. A writer says: "The instinct for parenthood in the basis of the family life. In the beginning, it may well have been a purely animal function. Potentially, however, it was an ideal basis, for in the intimacy of the family have grown up those sentiments and emotions which now glorify our human life. . . . Along with this reproductive instinct, obscuring it, even supplanting it, go the more disinterested non-sexual love, the genuine comradeship, the community of

intellectual and spiritual interest, which at their best would separately make of marriage a high venture in good fortune."

Coventry Patmore sings: "Why, having won her, do I woo?" To the ordinary individual we would say: "Because you have only bought your violin; you have now to learn how to draw music from it." The way of the ordinary man with a woman, as Balzac says, is the way of an ourang outang with a fiddle. A marriage ceremony, the uttering of certain words, or the payment of certain fees, associated with the imposition of a ring as a sort of duty stamp, gives a man a conventional right (some people think a legal, a religious, or a moral right) to do with a woman as he pleases, regardless of her wishes or feelings, or the physical or moral injury that may result. He knows no difference between a woman and a female. Such is the method of upbringing, and such is our system of education at present, that a refined woman, newly legalized as a wife, may at the outset feel scandalized or morally outraged. For days, weeks, months, and even years, she may resist, fearing she knows not what, but something certainly that was not in the bond so far as her knowledge was concerned. Her lord reminds her of her vows to love, honour, and obey. Sooner or later she obeys. But love rakes together the scattered rags of his belongings and leaves the moral shambles in disgust, blinded with scalding tears; and honour, his twin-brother, goes with him to seek lodging elsewhere; and they may never return. This is the condition of many a pair living, so far as is known to society and to their intimate friends, as a well-assorted and happy couple.

Sometimes one hears a sort of a protest—"Men don't understand woman," thrown out in such a

fashion as if women believed that all men, like Tiresias in the Metamorphoses, had at one time been women, and had remembered the experience that they had gained while living as such. How *should* men know women? How many women know themselves? In the stir and strife of emotions, duties, affections, impish impulses, and angelic aspirations, how many women have succeeded in finding their own physical, mental, and moral bearings?

An old song says, "Tell me, Mary, how to woo thee." But the maid or mate does not reply. She cannot. In the very nature of things her feelings must remain untold, her actions unexplained and very often misunderstood. How can she summon courage to tell her lover her constant hopes, her perpetual fears regarding love itself? How can she let it be known that her one guiding feeling is the fear that, voluntarily or involuntarily, she may do something that will make her lover think less of her? And men are not all thought-readers, knowing more of the ways of a maid than does the maid herself.

Man has obligations to himself, to other individuals, and to society at large. These have been set forth by an American writer in the following Pledge of Good Fortune:

1. I promise to treat myself as an individual; to seek the good fortune of strength and beauty and accomplishment and goodness; to place human considerations before material considerations; to decline all profit gained at the expense of women and children; to work only for human wealth (i.e., for human well-being).

2. I promise to treat others as individuals; to help them in their quest of personal good fortune; to put no obstacles in their way; to remove all ob-

stacles that I can; to treat their efforts after perfection seriously and sympathetically; to avoid personal ridicule and disparagement; to cultivate a universal comradeship.

3. I promise to further social welfare; to promote the idea that prosperity consists essentially in persons and only incidentally in things; to be true to this faith in public and in private, in work and in play; to help, so far as I can, the freedom of non-interference and of opportunity to seek in all social intercourse the seriousness and beauty of a high purpose.

Nietzsche says: "A thousand paths there are which have never yet been walked, a thousand salubrities and hidden islands of life. Unexhausted and undiscovered are still man and man's world. Self-realization, to be a complete man with the body beautiful, the mind clear, the spirit radiant, is a man's chief duty; and he must himself be personally responsible for it." "No man can redeem his brother." We are not made; we make ourselves. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts." We have not all the same structure, constitution, heredity, training, likings, ideals, talents, gifts, and there is no code of observances that will serve as a statement of specifically right and wrong actions for all. Ella Wheeler Wilcox says: "Where once I believed in a universal church for the world, I now believe in a separate creed for each soul, with the underlying basis of love for all created things as its foundation. Let each man worship in his own way and follow his own ideal of duty to God and humanity."

"A thousand creeds have come and gone;
  But what is that to you or me?
  Creeds are but branches of a tree,
The root of love lives on and on."

In books that we reverence for many reasons, we may every day read about systems of morality in which a man's wife is put along with his ox, and his ass, and things that are his, and that, too, without much if any choice on the woman's part at any stage of the proceedings. And even if the morality there set forth was meant to exist only in certain places, among certain peoples, and in a certain stage of the evolution of a particular race, it cannot be denied that the literal words of the Hebrew scriptures, without modification to present time, place, or circumstances, have an influence on a vast number of diverse races and sects at the present time.

When the Bible was accepted as the authoritative text-book on history, geography, and cosmography, as well as morality, there were some striking doctrines. St. Augustine said it was impossible there should be inhabitants on the opposite side of the earth, since no such race was recorded by scripture among the descendants of Adam. The most conclusive argument against the roundness of the earth was that, in the day of judgment, men on the other side of the globe could not see the Lord descending through the air. These beliefs were to those people as much integral parts of religious faith founded on scripture as was the belief in witchcraft to John Wesley, the scriptural sanction to negro slavery founded on the cursing of Ham by his father, or the objection to giving lying-in women chloroform on account of the child-bed curse pronounced in Eden.

In Christianity itself, when we separate the essentials from the accidentals, the original root from its excrescences, the tree itself from the profuse overgrowth that has overrun and concealed its goodly outline if not its very presence, we shall find that modern movements, modern philosophies, modern

demands, modern aspirations, are more in harmony with the Christian teaching of the gospels than are most of the sectarian teachings in the churches.

"The redemption of their soul is precious." "The thing to be redeemed is human nature, and the thing to redeem it is just this same human nature. . . . Doubtless, human nature will some time be a much fairer thing than it is now, but just as it is human nature is quite the most precious thing that the world has yet produced." Now, human nature means body and mind; and there is no mental condition, no emotion, no feeling, no exercise of will, without its bodily counterpart. We believe in the redemption of the body, the changing of the body "of our humiliation," not "our vile body." For there is nothing unclean by nature in our bodies, there are no vessels of dishonour; all things are honourable when honourably used towards honourable ends.

"Welcome is every organ and attribute of me,
And of any man hearty and clean,
Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile,
And none shall be less familiar than the rest."

Again, the same radical philosopher and moralist says:

"Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the muse,
Say the form complete is worthier far,
The female equally with the male, I sing.
Of life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The modern man I sing."

There are certain natural appetites which we possess in common with the lower animals—hunger, thirst, and the racial instinct, and we inherit them from our ancestors. We do not all have them developed in us to the same extent. Even hunger and thirst, which are essential for the preservation

of the individual, vary very greatly. The first thing to note is that these appetites are natural, and if not absolutely necessary they are certainly useful. "Your physical anatomy is the most valuable piece of property you will ever own." Every part exists for a purpose, and we have to learn what that purpose is and how best to use it rightly for that purpose. Hunger and thirst have their place in the scheme of human life as they have in animal life. They are incentives to work, and are thereby necessary for health. But this is not all that is to be said about human hunger and thirst. To us, as human beings, eating and drinking mean something more than satisfying mere physical requirements, something different from gratifying an animal appetite. We do not fill our stomachs at irregular intervals when they are empty. At stated times we dine. We have elevated eating and drinking to be social functions; we make meals and meal times minister to the intellectual, emotional, and social elements in our nature. We invoke reason to assist in the redemption of the necessary vegetative and vital functions of the body, to be spiritually helpful to the fullest spiritual life. Herein we differ from the lower animals. The brutes have not yet invented five o'clock tea, not even in the civilized or domestic surroundings of the Zoo.

Now the potentialities of the mere physical racial functions in both men and women are infinitely greater than what is required for the continuation of the human species. And these can be refined in the same way as the other appetites; nay, they are capable of promoting the spiritual well-being of men and women in a way that nothing else can approach or be compared with. This development is recent in the human race; it is also very restricted. But these refined feelings exist in more

people than we imagine, and are capable of being awakened and educated to an extent which few of us realize. Staars says: "Conjugal relations include all catagories of ideas, feelings and emotions, from direct bodily sensations up to the highest transcendental ideal." As the basis of morals, altruism, disinterested self-sacrificing love, this latest product of civilization, this poetry of sexual selection, demands not a passing reference but a whole course of lectures. For it is the basis of all art, music, poetry, literature, home life, educational institutions, science, philosophies, religions. We think it is immodest to talk about the existence and the mode of operation of the most powerful factor in the well-being and the elevation of the future human race. And yet nothing requires such careful study, nothing ever was capable of being used to the same extent as a spiritualizing force in human life. At the same time, or in consequence thereof, nothing is so capable of being the means of disrupting the lives of people who ought to be growing together daily into more perfect harmony.

"The ships sail east, and the ships sail west,
On the very same winds that blow;
'Tis the set of the sails, and not the gales,
That tells them the way to go."

The storm that serves but to drive one ship on its way, sends the other to the bottom. It is not the fault of the winds but of the vessel and the steersman. Our greatest opportunities of salvation may become our greatest causes of perdition. "One's nervous system can be made into one's good angel quite as readily as into one's devil." Physical ill and moral evil both arise from perversion of *normal and natural* functions.

One writer says: "The very intimacy of family life which makes possible the best fruits of the

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affections also makes possible the exercise of the most unbridled selfishness." Another, a modern woman, orthodox as some may think to a fault, says: "In the process of evolution it is only with the coming of the sex relation that life is enabled to rise to higher forms." And women and men alike are beginning to realize that it is only through a re-statement of moral values of "right," "wrong," "chastity," "fidelity," in a radical and revolutional way, which must come about gradually, that we can hope to help the progress of the world by elevating individual men and women and purifying them through the power of altruistic or spiritual love. Men and women will work, each class doing what it can do best and most effectively: man will be, or will continue to be, the active worker, the creator in things physical, intellectual, and spiritual; woman will refine him, ennoble him, inspire him, make him enthusiastic, i.e., filled with God.

Our first parents, after the failure of an experiment in conjugal life without filial or parental relations or social duties,

> "Hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow
> Through Eden took their solitary way,"

from a paradise lost.

Now we desire to see mankind evolving—a huge world of human beings, a community composed of all sorts of individuals, every one, however, hastening the coming of the kingdom in himself and in others as a present possession; men, ever the workers, striving restlessly after their ideals of beauty, strength, and purity, not through meaningless renunciation or annihilation, but by expansion, extension, and elevation of their every faculty; women, their comrades and companions, affectionate mates and devoted mothers, bringing their best into the world, self-discovering and self-revealing alike,

perpetuating and elevating the race by inspiring men and spiritualizing mankind, in a paradise regained. And this whole passing show is merely symbolic.

"All things transient
  As symbols are sent;
Here the inadequate
  Grows to event;
Here the ineffable
  Wrought is in love;
The ever-womanly
  Leads us above."

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